



Transforming retail collaboration across organizational boundaries with Google Cloud

A study of Travis Perkins by Google Cloud

Google Cloud

Executive summary

Travis Perkins, plc (LSE: TPK) can trace its company heritage to the 18th century. After over 200 years as the U.K.'s leading building supplies and home improvement retailer, executive leadership decided to partner with G Suite in order to modernize operations, foster collaboration, and reignite innovation. Travis Perkins launched the initiative as an initial pilot in 2013, and is rolling out to all 24,000 associates across 16 businesses and 1,900 locations.¹

Travis Perkins deployed G Suite for its entire workforce. Following the rollout, employees quickly adopted and began using G Suite. Innovation and collaboration happened organically within specific business units when staff were able to use the tools to improve their existing processes and discover new ways of working.

Travis Perkins' core business units including Marketing & Creative, Sales Management, Contracting & Pricing, Supply Chain, and Operations, have embraced the Google toolset and found ways to collaborate and share information more effectively within their teams and across the organization. The results have had a lasting impact on employees' ability to collaborate, share, and work more efficiently.

This case study explores the unique use and impact of the Google tools deployed across Travis Perkins' core business functions.

The G Suite team

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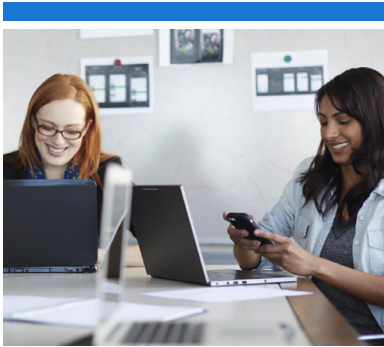
[Learn more](#) about G Suite or call us now at (855) 778-5079.

““ The innovation is being driven by the users. Our close partnership with the users in combination with the tools is yielding improvements in the business that we never imagined. ””

— Norman Bell, Group Strategy and IT Director, Travis Perkins

¹ "Google Enterprises brings Travis Perkins family closer together." 25 October 2013. Google Cloud Blog.

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Marketing & Creative

For many leading retailers, maintaining and extending brand strength is a foundational platform for growth. At Travis Perkins, managing a marketing function that spans 16 different businesses requires synchronized flexibility, regular collaboration, and flawless execution.² This team is responsible for driving over 7,000 projects on an annual basis.

² Interview. 28 January 2015.

Before

- Cross-functional project teams of 6-8 staff frequently met face-to-face to collaborate on deliverables and share project updates.
- Project information such as proofs, schedules and deliverables were stored in disparate locations (i.e., a number of different servers, local hard drives or USB devices). Project managers typically emailed content to the team, often resulting in a loss of version control.
- The current structure created challenges in project management and communication, and delayed stakeholder decision making.
- No formal mechanism existed for collecting customer feedback on deliverables. Typically, customer feedback was shared on an ad hoc and informal basis through email or verbal discussions.

After

- Project plans are created in Google Sheets and shared in a Google Drive folder. Team members now work more efficiently and collaborate in real time to make updates to the project schedule, tasks, and team roles and responsibilities.
- The team uses Google Hangouts in place of 'face-to-face' meetings, reducing the lead time for scheduling meetings and reserving meeting space. Deliverables are edited in real time during the Hangouts session, enabling faster decision making and reduced project completion times.
- Project 'briefs', or summary reports that outline the nature of the project are stored in Google Drive, which ensures that all team members have access to the latest content and can reference for future projects.
- Customers provide project feedback using Google Forms and project managers are now able to aggregate and synthesize the data and share with project members immediately. This has helped the creative team identify trends and opportunities for improvement.

Impact

G Suite has helped the Marketing and Creative team to improve **collaboration** both internally and externally with their stakeholders and partners. Collection and dissemination of project feedback increased significantly, which helps this team continue to **improve the quality** of their deliverables and meet their customers' expectations. **Transparency** improved and communication increased organically as the team used Google tools to re-engineer their existing business processes.

“ Project content used to be all over the place—personal drives, file servers, email attachments—and it was difficult to share due to large sizes. You didn't know who had seen a document and who had access. Now we just store and share from within Drive. ”

— Mark Smith, Design Studio, Travis Perkins



Sales Management (B2B Retail)

In the general contracting and building supply business, relationships are of the utmost importance. Travis Perkins' customers include consumers as well as established general contracting businesses that have relied on Travis Perkins for many years.^{3,4}

³Interview. 11 February 2015.

⁴Interview. 19 February 2015.

Before

- Pricing and quote information was emailed back and forth, with multiple versions of the same data in circulation. The sales teams and pricing/quotes teams were often misaligned on prices quoted to prospective customers, which presented challenges during final contract phases.
- Account management strategies were varied among the team, with each sales representative using a different approach. This limited collaboration and transparency among the sales management function and on many occasions led to missed opportunities.
- Account representatives often operated in singular work environments, unable to easily share updates on customers or quickly view a colleague's previous interactions with a customer.

After

- All sales materials and product literature are stored in Drive and accessible by all members of the team. Employees are able to access the database through their mobile devices and can quickly look up and share information with customers while on the go.
- Account managers have all of their files and customer information at their fingertips while visiting customers, checking build sites, and engaging with branch store teams.
- To increase transparency and standardize the account management process, the team developed two new applications on Google Cloud App Engine:
 - Quote Management System (QMS) - allows team members to review any customer profile to see which quotes have been presented. This helps employees understand what pricing and promotions may have been shared with potential customers and reduces redundancy and/or errors in the quotation process.
 - Sales Management System (SMS) - helps track specific relationships and sales opportunities and functions as a customer relationship management system.

Impact

Google tools have helped this team to achieve greater collaboration and transparency in the account management and business development processes. Sales teams have quick and regular access to the most up-to-date pricing and quote history for their customers, which has improved accuracy and led to shorter sales cycles. The use of QMS and SMS transformed the account management process from an ad hoc, paperwork driven process into an agile, digital process that is more transparent and efficient for this team and Travis Perkins customers.



Contracting & Pricing

At Travis Perkins, pricing needs for any given project can range from a small home renovation to a large hospital build. The Contracting & Pricing teams ensure accuracy in pricing and make sure that inventory levels are accurately forecasted based on current demands. In addition, this team works closely with customer service and other stakeholders to make sure customers have their products on time.

Before

- The Contracting & Pricing team works closely with contractors to collect and track material costs, primarily through word of mouth or email. If information was not updated appropriately or if there was a lapse in communication, the team could potentially reference outdated pricing information, posing a significant risk to the business.
- Other Travis Perkins business units frequently contacted this team for information on pricing, however requests were submitted informally via email or phone, and were not tracked.
- The team managed large projects using multiple spreadsheets in a variety of formats.

After

- Using Sheets, the team can now collect and store pricing information within the same document, with the added ability for multiple people to work and collaborate in real time.⁵
- Efficiency and turnaround time are critical factors to this team's success. With Google, they no longer have to be concerned whether they are accessing the most up-to-date pricing information for their contracts because there is a single source of the truth accessible by everyone.
- The contract management team improved its response rate to requests for information and shares information across the organization more efficiently with Google Forms. Employees are now able to submit requests for information, which are aggregated and pushed to specific teams such as marketing, pricing, compliance, human resources, etc.

Impact

Real-time collaboration has been an incredible tool for the Contracting & Pricing teams. In one example, a customer requested a quote for a project with over 6,000 unique items (SKUs) and the team had just one week to complete. The analytics team created a Sheet and started formatting, inputting formulas, and organizing for data entry. After just two days, the Sheet was ready for members of the pricing team to load and verify the various data points attached to each SKU. The pricing team was able to complete the data entry in two days, leaving a day to spare before submitting to the customer. Prior to Google, this request would have taken several weeks to complete.

“ We use Sheets to estimate large projects—it’s much better than Excel. We’ve been able to cut our estimating time in half. ”

— Damien Brewis, Contract Estimating-Plumbing & Heating, Travis Perkins

⁵Interview. 19 January 2015.



Supply Chain & Operations

Delivering a frictionless customer experience with product delivery arriving on time and at the right location requires dynamic supply chain operations.^{6,7} The Supply Chain & Operations team manages the flow of products across the 16 businesses that make up Travis Perkins.

⁶ Interview. 14 January 2015.

⁷ Interview. 6 February 2015.

Before

- As Travis Perkins grew to include a range of business units and brands, many challenges emerged from integrating supply chain and operations functions.
- Transferring stock among various locations was a tedious process hampered by multiple tracking systems, paper reporting and duplicative touch points.
- The complexity of the manual inventory reporting process resulted in missed information or reports that did not often match the actual inventory levels received.

After

- The team developed an internal Google Site to enable more cross-functional collaboration with teams in different geographies. Travis Perkins teams across the world are now able to share information using a central platform for resources, contacts, and community messages specific to the Supply Chain, Transportation, and Operations teams.
- The team has streamlined the stock transfer process by leveraging Google Forms and Sheets to track inventory transfers across Travis Perkins' business units. With this new process, the team has reduced the number of reporting errors and removed paper from the process.
- Reports containing key KPIs are stored and managed in a central folder on Drive, giving team members immediate access, rather than waiting on updates via email.

Impact

At Travis Perkins, the introduction of new Google tools served as a grassroots catalyst to revamp and streamline pre-existing processes. Previously, the value of inventory lost during this process cost the business nearly 500,000 £ annually in lost stock. Under the new stock transfer process, Travis Perkins set aggressive targets, intending to reduce inventory management errors by 80 to 90% across various categories. Achieving this goal would drastically reduce unforeseen inventory recovery expenses, last-minute air freight delivery costs, and wasted employee time. Use of Google Forms and Sheets within the stock transfer process has significantly improved the accuracy and efficiency of this business process.

“ We expect the new stock transfer process with Google tools to reduce errors by 80 to 90%. ”

– Paul Rance, Freight & Shipping Project Manager, Travis Perkins

Conclusion

Since moving to Google, Travis Perkins has experienced significant improvement in its agility, collaboration, and efficiency as an organization. However, the real benefit has been a renewed sense of entrepreneurship and innovation adopted by employees as they continue to discover new ways to improve their day-to-day operations using Google tools.

It is important to note, the transition to Google was not without challenge. Employees across Travis Perkins required steadfast coaching and genuine commitment and support from executive leadership.

Now, employees are able to develop and share their own solutions to improve the business and connect with customers, ensuring success for the future of Travis Perkins.

About Travis Perkins, plc

The Travis Perkins Group is the U.K.'s leading company in the builders' merchant and home improvement market, and the U.K.'s largest supplier to the building and construction market. The Group operates 16 businesses from 1,900 sites across the U.K., and employs approximately 24,000.

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